Emplacing and Excavating the City: Art, Ecology, and Public Space in New Delhi

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> *Every claim on public space is a claim on the public imagination. It is a response to the questions: What can we imagine together?… Are we, in fact, a collective; is the collective a site for the testing of alternatives, or a ground for mobilising conformity?*
>
> (Adajania 2008)

Introduction

Contemporary art production can facilitate the study of a city's urban fabric, its societal change, and its cultural meaning production; this is particularly the case when examining exhibition practices and questions of how, why, when, where, and by whom artworks came to be emplaced and connected to certain themes and concepts.[*] Emplacement here refers to the process of constructing space for certain events or activities that involve sensory and affective aspects (Burrell and Dale 2014, 685). Emplacing art thus concerns a particular and temporary articulation of and in space within a relational set of connections (rather than binaries). In South Asia, where contemporary "fine art"[1] is still largely confined to enclosed spaces like the museum or the gallery, which seek to cultivate a "learned" and experienced audience, the idea of conceptualising art for and in rapidly expanding and changing cities like Delhi challenges our notions of place, publicness, and urban development. The particular case discussed here, the public art festival, promises—and sets out—to explore an alternative vision of the city, alternative aspirations towards "belonging to and participating in" it.[2] Nancy Adajania's question "What can we imagine together" indirectly addresses which repositories and languages are available and can be used for such a joint effort, and who should be included in the undertaking. How can an elite discourse of contemporary, globalised art—undoubtedly self-reflexive and critical as well as potentially transgressive—be emplaced in public space? Does art, once brought into the public space, undermine its exclusiveness to enable the shaping of "public space" as, in Adajania's words, a collective "site for the testing of alternatives?" Is such an approach possibly also—at least in part—testing alternatives for a globalised art that "lost touch"

doi: 10.11588/ts.2015.1.16507

so it can exit from exclusionary mechanisms of knowledge production and institution building? The aspiration to "be meaningful" to more than those visiting gallery spaces, to speak an urban language, and to contribute to changing cities into liveable spaces for all, generates contradictions and tensions that we seek to explore here.

In this article the idea of art as way of engaging with the future of the city and as "temporary space use" will enable an analysis of the complicated relationship between the city, art, and ecology, and between the different groups and institutions that contributed to a specific public art festival, the *48°C Public.Art.Ecology*. However, even though the aspiration of the festival was to become the property of the public across all social strata, and to integrate as well as collaborate with local groups was sought in particular instances—such as Mary Miss' work *Roshanara's* Net, made up of a temporary garden of medical plants that invited surrounding communities to engage with and rethink a dilapidated Mughal heritage site, or Shaina Anand and Ashok Sukumaran's *Motornama Roshanara*, involving rickshaw-drivers' narrations of the decline of an industrial neighbourhood[3]—the sources and data upon which this paper is based point towards a predominantly elite and educated discourse of "belonging," "participating," and "publicness."[4]

48°C Public.Art.Ecology, which was held 12–21 December, 2008 in the booming urban agglomeration of Delhi, the world's second most populous city with around twenty million inhabitants, was the first large-scale public art and ecology festival in India.

***Fig. 1**: Detail from the frontpage of the* 48°C Public.Art.Ecology *festival's website, using a cityscape image.*

For almost two weeks, visitors viewed art projects created by more than twenty-five artists: works by seventeen Indian artists and collectives and eight artists and groups from the United States, the Netherlands, Germany, Japan, Canada, Switzerland, Denmark, and Argentina. Their works were located at eight nodal points spread across a central part of the city and connected through the newly built metro network.

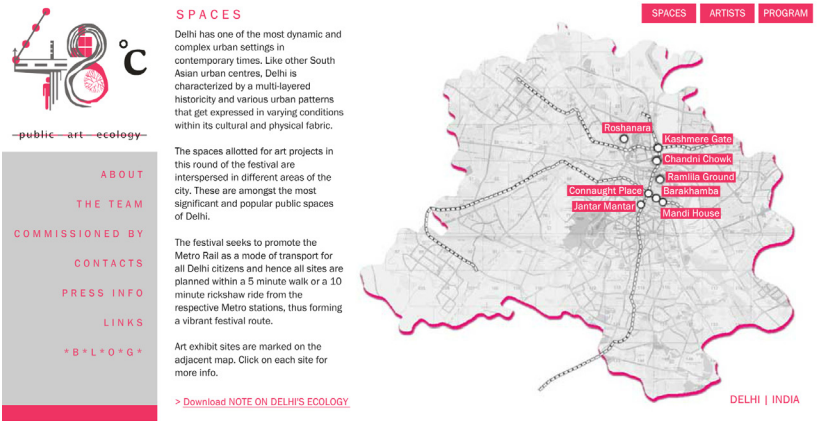

Fig. 2: *The eight selected sites along the metro lines, including a short blurb from the concept note of the festival.*

The artists were encouraged to engage with local groups and research historical specificities at the selected sites. Artists could also seek support from a research team comprising faculty, junior researchers, or students of urban design.[5] As a supplement to the artworks, a symposium on ecology, urban space, and public art was held, and nature walks, film screenings, and talks on environmental and ecological issues were offered as a further complement to the installations.

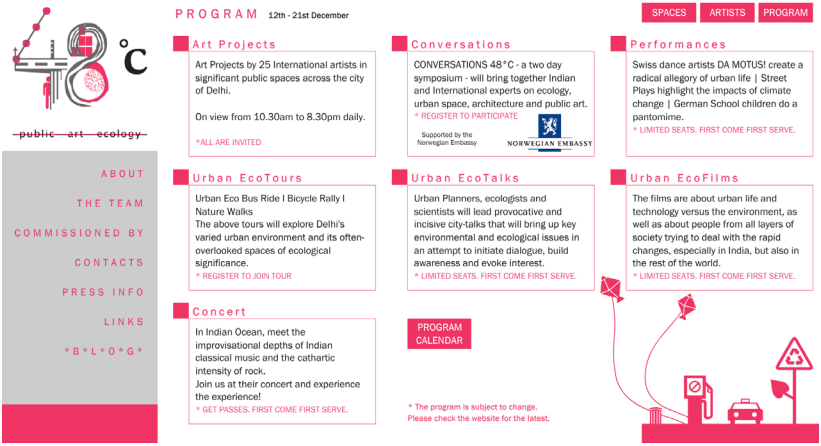

Fig. 3: 48°C Public.Art.Ecology *festival programme.*

Although all the works were removed after the festival, detailed documentation of the event was provided by two films (Bose 2009a and b), a small brochure of the artworks published by the Goethe-Institut (GI 2008), and an edited volume which is currently in preparation. However, the fact that the majority of activities and available documents for public communication were produced in English underlines the festival's exclusionary character. Even if English counts as a "link language" in India, the majority of Delhi's citizens would not have been able to engage with the material without challenges. This was different with the artworks: some national and international artists used Hindi alongside English, the volunteers at the sites could speak at least two languages, and a work like *Motornama Roshanara* challenged visitors by featuring Hindi-speaking rickshaw drivers as guides.

The fairly short exhibition period and the fact that the festival was a single unrepeated event notwithstanding, *48°C* was remarkable in its size, thematic focus, the kinds of exhibits it produced, and the media attention it attracted.[6] As a critical intervention it motivated the establishment of several initiatives related to public art while also encouraging multiple audiences to engage with the city through the theme of environment and ecology. Knowing that one festival could change neither the prevalent exclusive attitude towards urban planning nor the exclusive mechanisms of contemporary art, the organisers sought to establish the event as a "beginning of a conversation" (Pooja Sood, in Bose 2009b), or a "seed of change" (Mary Miss, ibid). Furthermore, ecology has, since the new millennium, become one of the key themes used to source funding and attract investors from both private and public sectors and national and international backgrounds, both for environmental work and cultural production. The initiative revealed early signs of what has come to be known as the "festivalisation of cities," or the "Biennalisation" of art; both are popular strategies to attract capital flows and media attention and are effective in making a city, an art community, or a festival more visible to a global audience (Filipovic et al. 2009; Quinn 2005).

To investigate this phenomenon and explore the dynamic fabric of a city like Delhi, we find the notion of "in-between space" as dynamic temporary space, which is manifest in public art festivals like *48°C*, to be particularly suited. Rather than reducing "in betweenness" to a gap between monolithic binaries, we draw upon Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's (1988, 25) notion of the "in between" as a zone of connectivity across various levels, and the German concept of "temporary space use" (*Zwischenraumnutzung*) which alludes to the ability to temporarily fill a "gap" with new significance and aesthetic experience, very much like a liminal space.[7] Seen from such a perspective, *48°C* succeeded in bringing to the fore a temporary landscape of

sites that changed the city's face for a while and showing aspects that would have otherwise remained invisible, forgotten, marginalised. Yet, despite their critical and creative potential such festivals also run the risk of turning art and urban space into a didactic strategy that merely serves the agendas of larger economic-political issues, and interests or anxieties of a privileged social stratum. The festival underlined the idea of an inclusive city, open to all citizens. But paradoxically, this theoretical underpinning can also exclude certain vernacular or "inappropriate" factors (e.g., religion's role in everyday life, or "folklore" as a domain of the public). Art scholars like Annapurna Garimella (2012) have criticised the hierarchising of art forms at festivals like *48°C* where forms of "vernacular street art" are sidelined or dismissed as "naïve" and "uncritical." While *48°C* aimed at overcoming the exclusivist language of gallery spaces, the format of the white cube was still the basis of some of the works. Consequently, the selected sites were approached with a particular art practice agenda that must be distinguished from more "popular" interventions in secular public spaces, such as *melas* (fairs), *yatras* (religious procession), and other forms of performance (Guha-Thakurta 2011).

There are parallel initiatives, which—though not on an equivalent scale or using the same thematic and organisational framework—mirror a similar interventionist spirit in public space. A good case in point is the Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust (hereafter SAHMAT[8]) and its continuing activities for the promotion of secularism and cultural pluralism in India, particularly in light of the rise of the politics of religious extremism since the late 1980s. Additionally, the changing field of labour forces and their exploitation through global capitalism is a frequent subject of art and street theatre. With Vivan Sundaram and Sheba Chhachhi, for instance, *48°C* featured two major proponents of these critical initiatives. Another example is the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival in Mumbai's Fort area, which has been held annually since 1999 and turns one neighbourhood into a *mela* for nine days using street art installations. Karen Zitzewitz defines this particular event as appealing "strongly to the centrality of ethics" and as nominating "fine art and art world spaces as mechanisms for the production of a cosmopolitan disposition" by using the ethics of a particular form of urban imaginary and modernism that, as the scholar further elaborates in her book *The Art of Secularism* (Zitzewitz 2014), manages to join appreciation for pluralism with a "desire for social justice" (ibid., 96). Similarly, the *48°C* festival brochure declared the aim of providing "public spaces for culture, dialogue and peaceful interactions of civil society and communities" (GI 2008, 7).

The rhetoric of temporary space management may also include the processual transformation of "abandoned," "silenced," or "ignored" spaces or wasteland into "usable" and creative spaces in urban environs. It may facilitate certain

groups to sense their potential to shape the city, at least temporarily, and thus participate in its change. It may encourage others to invest in increasing property value and thus exclude groups formerly "belonging" to the place undergoing change (gentrification). The risk is (partial) privatization and closure. In the case of *48°C*, the imagination of the opposite is evoked: equal access to art and public space in an otherwise highly hierarchical, competitive, and exclusive society; a laboratory for a "new" (and better) city. The art festival creates the vision of possible urban change for a responsible and inclusive civil society. One could further argue that *48°C* also provided an opportunity for temporary redefinition and appropriation of the city (Haydn and Temel 2006). To shape new imaginaries of the city, the festival sites "excavated" older layers of urban history that relate back to the Mughal period, the British Empire, or more recent post-colonial developments. This article reveals how the art festival created "multiple relationships between art and the city" (Hall 2007, 1376), many of which were based on (constructive) conflict and exclusion (Deutsche 1996), on ambivalence and contradictions. According to Mitchell (2003), *48°C* can be seen as a means of claiming the right to the city, a right that often lies in the hands of hegemonic groups and institutions who privilege the idea of an institutionalised and dominant nationalism. *48°C*'s aim was to stimulate demotic, civic participation in city politics, allowing for a more differentiated, local, and critical interaction with ownership in and of the city through the artworks, community involvement, or the accompanying activities offered.

This article will explore three qualities of "in-between" space and will draw upon the works of, and interviews with, some of the artists and researchers who made *48°C* possible.

All interviews and statements used come from groups that can be identified as "learned." They belong to professional museum and curating circuits, the artists involved, and researchers. The first aspect I want to consider is the role of both ecology and art in defining the different qualities of public space and publicness during *48°C*. The translocal dynamics which were imbedded in the public art festival by entangling notions of public art and ecology will be explored through the works of Haubitz + Zoche (Germany/UK) and Krishnaraj Chonat (India). The discussion of these artworks will touch on issues of access, mobility, and experience in public as well as the multiple functions and histories of spaces (e.g., river pollution and deforestation). A second focus will explore the relationship between dominant regulation, demotic moderation, and the appropriation of space (Zukin 2010, 24). This relationship will be examined through art projects by Friso Witteveen (Netherlands) and Ravi Agarwal (India). A third focus will explore public art as a means of reflecting

and inserting protest into public spaces, and will thereby consider restrictions of access and of citizenship. Amar Kanwar's project *The Sovereign Forest* (India) will be examined as a specific deliberation on public art and protest spaces in Delhi.

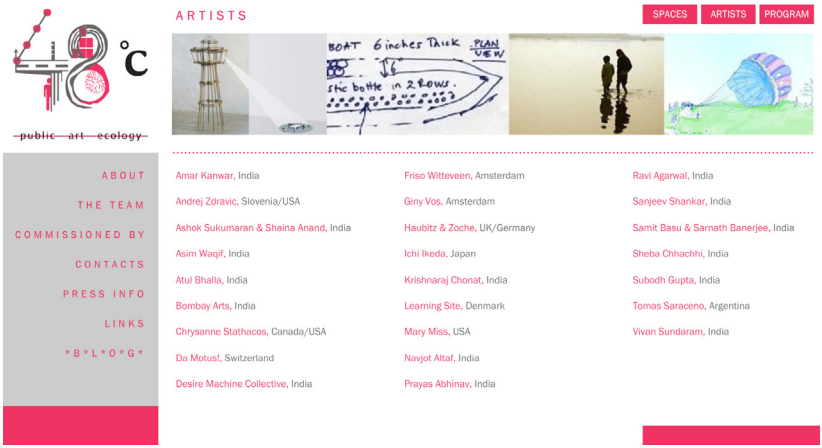

***Fig. 4**: List of national and international artists and artist groups/performers.*

Focus 1: Relating global and local perspectives on public space

Rather than understanding global and local as two poles (one static, the other mobile and placeless), the concept of "in-between" space suggests that a translocal approach can assist an understanding of simultaneously connected spaces that allow one to perceive different shades of a concept such as "public space" (see Freitag and van Oppen 2010, 5). This concept is less fraught with the elitism that sometimes marks cosmopolitanism, centre-periphery-asymmetries, or arguments of "influence;" it is also reflected in the organisational framework of *48°C*, which was composed of a bi-national team and employed a transcultural approach: *48°C* was commissioned by the Goethe-Institut New Delhi and the International Cooperation Enterprise for Sustainable Development (GTZ, now GIZ); in addition, it was supported by the Delhi Government, the environmental NGO Delhi Greens, the Norwegian Embassy, the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, and the Japan Foundation.[9] The festival was curated by Pooja Sood, artistic director of Khoj International Artists Association, upon invitation by the Goethe-Institut South Asia in Delhi (hereafter GI). Because this initiative was the first of its kind on this scale, shifting the idea of contemporary art from the gallery into the open city space, collaboration with different experts was a necessary curatorial prerequisite.

Much attention was invested in the allocation of, and then permits for, exhibition sites, which is why Sood approached architect and urban designer K. T. Ravindran to bring in a team of researchers from the TVB School of Habitat Studies and the Department of Urban Design at the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA). The collaboration with the Urban Resource Group (hereafter URG) was crucial in that the researchers "excavated" and sourced data on the selected festival sites by means of mapping so that the artists could choose the most appropriate place for their exhibition needs.

The team produced "activity" maps to study which spaces were "activated" by whom, when, and how (e.g., commuters, lunch break, commercial, religious). Moreover, the group explored the use of the particular sites by particular social groups (e.g., industrial labour, white collar workers). Sood mentions the challenge of thinking about the different kinds of publics addressed and engaging with such a festival, what the event could mean to "the public", and whether it would make a difference for the city's future.[10] Stefan Dreyer, then director of the Goethe-Institut (hereafter GI), also told me that a plan to host an event addressing the question of public space in India had been in the pipeline for a long time (pers. comm., Delhi 2008). The GI in Delhi has a long and respected history of creating platforms for critical discussion and engagement; since the 1990s it has fostered relationships with artists, filmmakers, writers, activists, and intellectuals in Delhi and beyond. Bringing together the critical and financial support team for *48°C* and securing state support and permits for each site posed a challenge, not least because a project of this size and format had never been undertaken in Delhi before. Cooperation with Pooja Sood had been secured several years earlier, and the GIZ had a declared interest in supporting a project that fit their agenda. The collaboration between these diverse groups is pertinent to the translocal dynamics and synergies discussed in this article: for instance, GIZ's agenda was reflected in the German organisation's interest in environmental issues, while the GI helped to choreograph a more intellectual narrative and a focus on the role and fabric of public space in Delhi's cultural milieu. Although the GIZ's developmental background—though its role was as a partner rather than as a donor—increasingly perceives urban environments as a threat to natural habitats, the GI sees its role as a catalyst for debates about civil society by means of cultural incentives and activities. Khoj, on the other hand, envisages a more responsive and dynamic infrastructure for cutting-edge contemporary artists and it combines this with intellectual debates about the environment, public art, urbanisation, and transregional networking across Asia. The city administration possibly hoped to burnish their image, realising the need to encourage civil participation in urban recreation and identification with local cultural politics, particularly with respect to the growing environmental

challenges, such as water shortage, pollution, deforestation, and air pollution as well as the health issues that accompany them (Zukin 2010, 5). Although other social groups were not excluded from the event, by and large, and often unacknowledged, the festival reflected a perspective of the educated and English-speaking middle classes familiar with the discourse on climate change and the format of public art interventions.

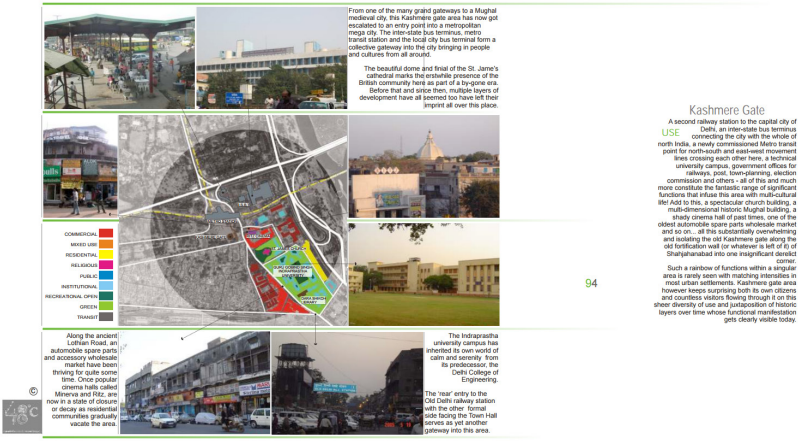

Fig. 5a: *"Use map" of Kashmere Gate created by the Urban Resource Group.*

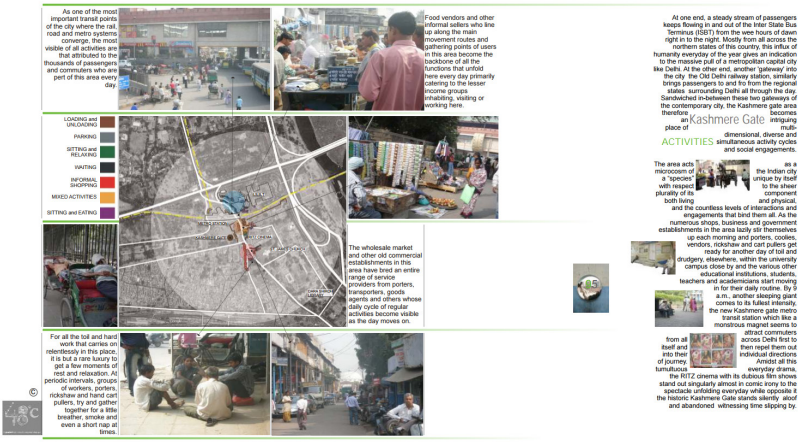

Fig. 5b: *"Activities map" of Kashmere Gate created by the Urban Resource Group.*

48°C presented Delhi as a metropolitan city that was, on the one hand, pushing with full force towards rapid urban growth and change, with all of the enormous environmental and urban planning challenges that entails, and, on the other hand, challenging the "world class" rubric in order to develop and contemplate alternatives. Artworks touched upon themes such as water scarcity, air pollution, deforestation, public transport, and population management, but also on the local histories of social groups and neighbourhoods, ancient heritage sites, and the decline of industries due to the changing priorities of urban planning and life.

Positioning "public" spaces

There was an ethical undertone to the event; both nature and public space, it seemed, were part of an alarming narrative of "extinction," which demanded drastic steps of protection and regeneration in order to make a city like Delhi a better place for everyone to live. Indeed, the name of the festival, *48°C Public. Art.Ecology*, is a reference not only to the highest temperature ever recorded in Delhi, but also to global warming and to the city as an overheated organism of urban planning, population density, and real estate development. Delhi's ambition to be considered a "world class city" (Brosius 2014) simultaneously facilitates demolition and removal and privileges the tastes and desires of elite status groups. Arunava Dasgupta, head of the Department of Urban Design at the School of Planning and Architecture and project advisor to the URG that provided the artists with information on the sites, laments a "loss of everyday public realms that the social life of this city has actually suffered heavily" (GI 2008, 16). He suggests that everyday urban public space is sacrificed "to increasing privatization of public domains, greater exclusivity in urban access conditions and steady degradation of physical quality of the few existing urban spaces" (ibid.). Underlining this is the idea that belonging and social stratification are spatialised and legitimised through gating and restriction of access, in other words: strategies of emplacement. This inclination resonates in the works of authors like Sharon Zukin, who studies issues of access and urban ownership. In her recent book *Naked City* she reflects on participation as belonging and proposes a search for "origins" as a concept "enabling people to put down roots. This is the right to inhabit a space, not just to consume it as an experience" (2010, 6). While I find the term "origins" problematic because of its nativist undertones, I think that Zukin's work can help us look at the art festival as a project of emplacement and excavation as well as a search for different trajectories that complicate the relation to a place. The works featured in *48°C* speak of multi-layered meanings of rivers, urban planning, and dislocation and thematise forgetting and repressing, as well as connecting and remembering. In several cases, such as the dilapidated heritage sites or

the de-industrialised neighbourhoods in Old Delhi, belonging derives from narratives of nostalgia or loss; indeed, *48°C* assembled a variety of public sites that have, to some extent, already been turned into memories through closure, privatisation, material decline, and civil neglect. It is the temporal animation or enchantment of these otherwise sidelined places that highlights the concept of "emplacement" and "in betweenness" for this analysis.

What united all sites was their close vicinity to metro stations, which allowed visitors to reach artworks in a ten to fifteen minute walk or five minute rickshaw drive. The accessibility was crucial to ensure that visitors could develop a new and intimate experience of the city.

The different qualities and topographies of "authentic places" also alert us to the fact that the organisation of public space in India, often rooted in colonial urban planning, is not just the result of a homogenising "Westernisation" but has also evolved from other local aspects and vernacular histories of public spaces such as the *maidan* (large assembly place) (ibid.), the *adda* (local coffeehouse) (Chakrabarty 1999), or the *ghats* (riverbank with steps). But in what way can these sites be termed "public"? Emphasising the difficulty in applying universal and highly Eurocentric concepts to India, Sudipta Kaviraj (1997) famously argued that

> … [t]he idea of the public is a particular configuration of commonness that emerged in the capitalist-democratic West in the course of the eighteenth century. It has some associations, particularly ones like universal access and *öffentlichkeit* (openness), which might not be expected to exist universally in ideas of common space (1997, 86). […] the idea or the concept of the public is only a historically specific configuration of the common. In Indian society there was a rich repertoire of concepts of common responsibility, obligation, action, that did not share the characteristic features of a bourgeois publicity like a recognisable source, proper authorisation, impersonality, legality, state sanction, and clear ascription of individual responsibility, nor did it carry the no less crucial negative feature of being distinguished from the private. (1997, 89)

In his study of the *maidan* in Calcutta, he also demonstrates how a "foreign" concept has been accommodated and "vernacularised"—turned into an "authentic" local site—for different local groups and classes and, for the staging of protest and other forms of civil concern (ibid., 100–108), transformed into a transcultural contact zone. As this paper highlights, the notion of "public" with respect to defining the role of "public art" and "ecology" is critical and

projects a consensus about "public" as the largest inclusive space that provides access for all people equally, and the protection of "ecology" as collective domain and duty. Yet, depending on where, by whom, and when the term is used, it carries with it an inherent device of inequality and exclusion, as well as different definitions of citizenry and civil society and their ownership over "public space" and the city's different ecologies.

The festival was intended to engender social inclusion, states Ainsworth on the website *Curating Cities. A Database of Eco Public Art*: It "provided an opportunity for new audiences to experience contemporary art. Some of the local roadside teashops were transformed into media hubs where visitors could stop for chai and have a conversation about the festival or the city. The teashops created a democratic atmosphere, with people from different areas coming together and sharing space."[11] Whether these sites were really used by all visitors alike cannot be confirmed, but the example suggests an awareness that even public spaces are part of processes of distinction and social differentiation. The "new" spaces that emerged with economic liberalisation, such as malls, cafés, or lounge bars, have also become the signatures of a newly emerging public leisure space and of a "gated" privacy that is predominantly accessible to an educated and affluent public. In referring to *48°C*, Dasgupta's statement seems to suggest that a steady decline of everyday spaces for the "ordinary" citizens and city has favoured the privileged classes. If, as has often been suggested, the global city's move towards consumer-oriented neoliberal agendas has brought public space under scrutiny, where it is increasingly contested as globalised, privatised, surveyed, or regulated, then we must also recognise that public space in India has a different trajectory and that the proposed loss of public space in the wake of privatisation must be analysed critically and carefully in order to see different local and temporal qualities in the "social production of space" (Lefebvre 1991). In the *48°C* brochure, Dasgupta suggests that the festival allowed local variants of public space to unfold:

> Ironically, it is in these indigenous urban spaces interspersed within the fabric of the city that clues to a possible alternative trajectory of the present confusing urban scenario unfold and get enacted […] while the ongoing cry of "broader perspectives and larger goals" from city authorities, planners, designers, policy makers become more and more intense and tangible. (GI 2008, 16)

By discussing "indigenous" spaces, Dasgupta indicates that he has no intention of privileging a monolithic and linear Indian urbanity that seeks to move towards "the developed city." Rather, he signals the existence and

recognition of vernacular public spaces (such as a street or river embankment). The quote invokes the notion of "meaningful" space as something that is rooted in and based on everyday use (Zukin 2010), thus shifting attention to specific ecologies and histories that are often rendered peripheral in the larger, often Eurocentric, categories, aspirations, and imaginaries of urban planning (see Haubitz + Zoche, below). Dasgupta's emphasis on "indigenous" spaces and their recovery is also in tune with geographer Jennifer Robinson's insistence that we acknowledge the positions of "ordinary cities" and places as a counterpoint to the linear, canonised, and top-down demands of the category of "world class cities" (Robinson 2005; Mitchell 2003). Likewise, others argue for an approach that is not so heavily rooted in a stereotyped and essentialised difference between "India" and "Europe," as touched upon by the artist-environmental activist Ravi Agarwal in conversation with documentary filmmaker Krishnendu Bose:

> We always talk of European cities where the street life is very good and [the] coffee shops [are] but I think there is no difference here. I am sure if you put [a] street chair out on a pavement, just a chair, people will come and sit on it; [if] you put two chairs there will be a conversation so there is a conversation going to be happening. But those two chairs are not available, the chairs on the pavement today. (Bose 2009a; see also Demos 2013)

48°C emerges at the critical interstices which are taken for granted in comparisons of "East" and "West," particularly in the context of the Delhi government's growing aspiration to turn Delhi into a "world class city." (Brosius 2014) Parts of this state-driven rhetoric includes concepts like "urban recreation," "green," or "eco-city," all of which highlight the challenge of transforming booming cities into sustainable environments, albeit for different reasons and "user groups" (Rademacher and Sivaramakrishnan 2013).[12] By reinventing the city both as ecosystem and social fabric, *48°C* emphasised urban nature as a means of creating and unmaking public spaces, local histories, and memory. For instance, various art projects addressed the social and ritual role of water usage and access in Delhi's history and paid close attention to the shifting meanings and values attributed to water as a public resource. Sheba Chhachhi's work *The Water Diviner* on display at the public library on Chandni Chowk, Old Delhi, explored the use of waterways under Mughal and British rule to highlight the various layers of urban development and historical memory that are sidelined in contemporary urban politics and everyday life.

***Fig. 6a**: Sheba Chhachhi's* The Water Diviner *displaying a historic map of a Mughal waterway on Chandni Chowk. Sheba Chhachhi,* The Water Diviner*, 2008. Video projection (based on photographs by Umeed Mistry), silent, duration 3 minute loop. Delhi, Public Library.*

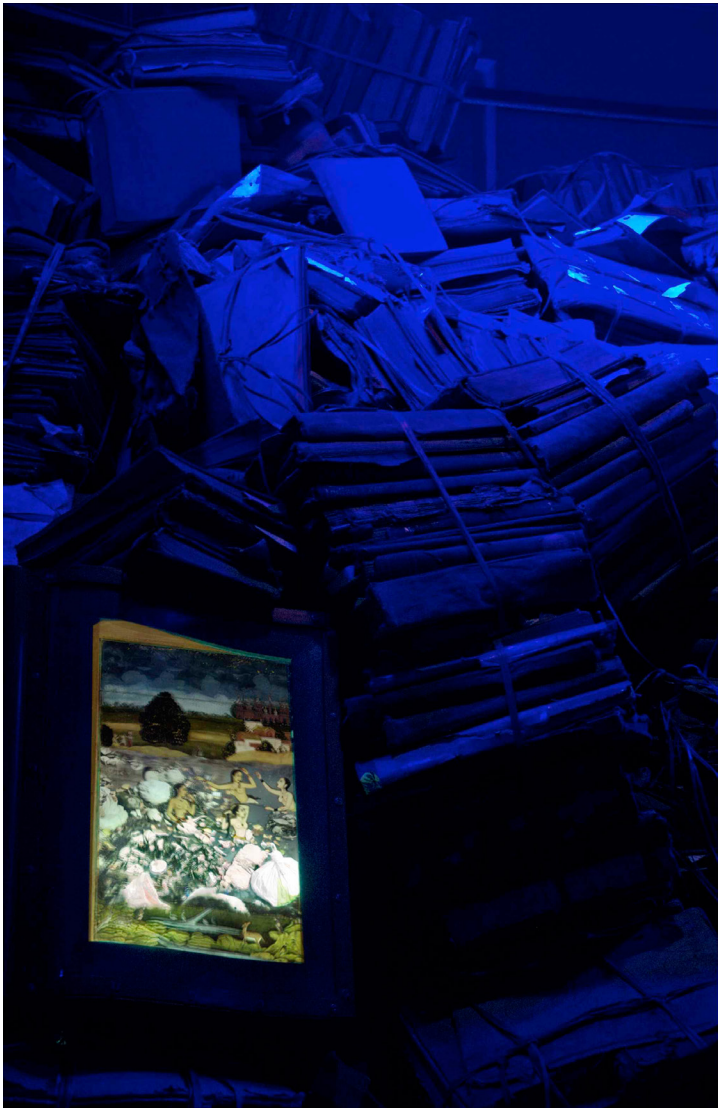

***Fig. 6b**: Sheba Chhachhi's* The Water Diviner *showing a montage of a miniature related to Krishna playing with the gopis/gopis taking a bath in the river, superimposed on a contemporary photograph of Yamuna filled with garbage. Sheba Chhachhi,* The Water Diviner*, 2008. Video projection (based on photographs by Umeed Mistry), silent, duration 3 minute loop. Delhi, Public Library.*

The installation that fills the underground swimming pool, which was only discovered in the course of the research undertaken by the Delhi-based artist, consists of parcelled-up newspaper, light boxes, and a video screen, all immersed in blue light. One of Chhachhi's central propositions of the work is that people today have forgotten the river Yamuna's mythological relevance as a divine and feminine body, and a setting for religious narratives such as the love story between Radha and Lord Krishna. To recuperate lost memories of the history of water in Delhi, and drawing from the riverine culture of the Yamuna, Chhachhi evokes tropes from popular culture such as the gopis bathing in the river, the ascetic, or musicians on the river bank. At the heart of the installation lies a long light box showing an 1830 map of Shahjanabad (Old Delhi, where the installation is situated) with the then existing waterways, which have been replaced by roads and railways.

Another use of public art and ecology as an "in-between" space revealing the everyday vernacular, fragmented sites, and aspects of an informal and "ordinary" city, surfaced in Atul Bhalla's work *Chabeel*.

***Fig. 7a**: Craftsmen completing their work on the kiosk. Atul Bhalla,* Chabeel*, 2008. Sand, cement, water, ceramic tiles, stickers, recyclable paper, plywood, video projection, dimensions variable. Delhi, Kashmere Gate.*

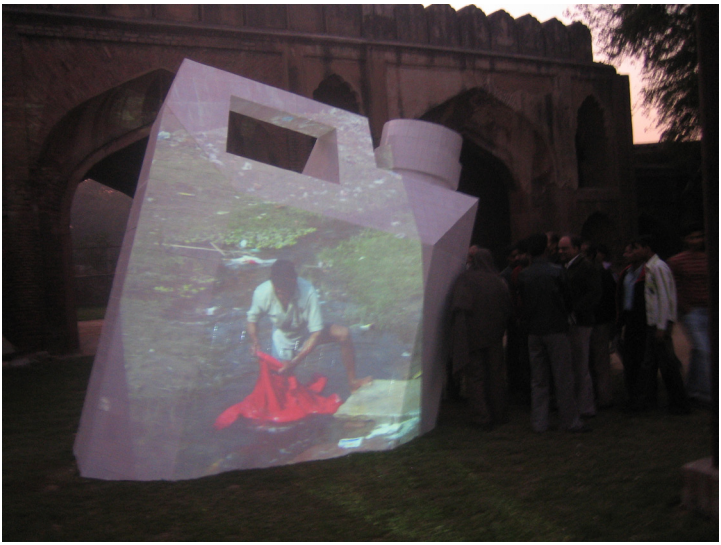

***Fig. 7b**:* Chabeel *in the evening, when Bhalla projected images taken from his Yamuna Walk. Atul Bhalla,* Chabeel*, 2008. Sand, cement, water, ceramic tiles, stickers, recyclable paper, plywood, video projection, dimensions variable. Delhi, Kashmere Gate.*

***Fig. 7c**: Another element of the artwork attached to a barrier on a street outside Kashmere Gate. Atul Bhalla,* Have You Ever Seen the Yamuna*, 2008. Sand, cement, water, ceramic tiles, stickers, recyclable paper, plywood, video projection, dimensions variable. Delhi, Kashmere Gate.*

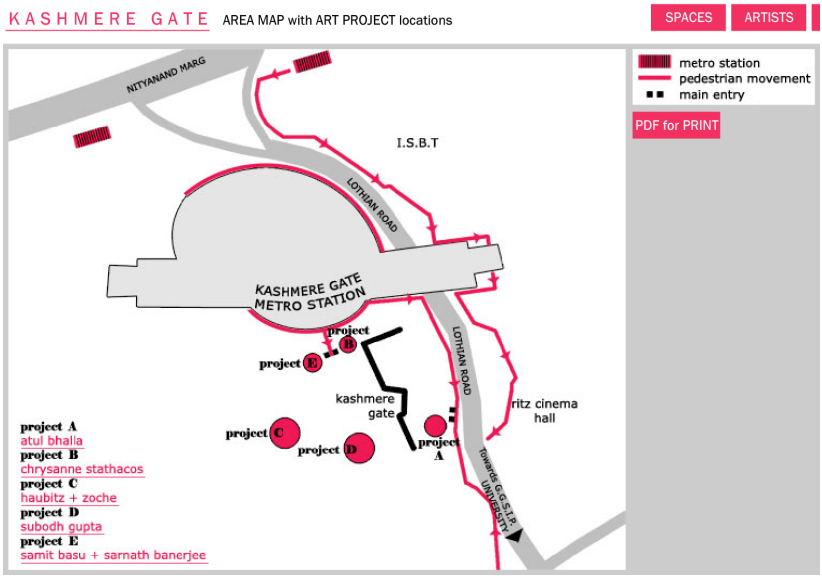

***Fig. 7d**: Plan of the artworks' locations around Kashmere Gate.*

The installation of an enlarged walk-in water vessel placed next to Kashmere Gate (a Mughal monument under "protection" by the Archaeological Survey of India, located near one of the largest metro stations and normally closed to the public). It also served as a kiosk and was based on the Northwest Indian ritual of handing out free drinking water to the public, which is considered to be a means of earning personal merit. *Chabeel*, explains Bhalla (pers. email communication, 2015), "is essentially a Punjabi phenomenon and has its source in *Nirjala Ekadashi*, the eleventh day of the hottest month. This day is celebrated by Hindus and Sikhs as a day to give out free *lassi* (yoghurt-based drink, CB) and now food; the practice has now been taken over by the Sikhs on occasions of the birthdays of the Sikh gurus." Moreover, the vessel is often used as a personal carrier of sacred water when visiting a holy river for pilgrimage. Aimed at remembering the forgotten and shifted waterways of the past—and in that sense showing parallels to Chhachhi's *Water Diviner*—Bhalla pursued the idea of the multi-layered histories and narratives. He excavated one such connected history when he looked at old maps of pre-1956 Delhi and discovered that the Yamuna once ran next to Kashmere Gate. Bhalla connected his performative installation to the Yamuna River with signboards in the metro station and stickers in Hindi and English asking "Have you ever seen the Yamuna? Have you ever touched the Yamuna?" He thereby suggests that the river has been effectively cut off from the city's everyday life, since for

many "city-zens" it has become a restricted area or a "nuisance" to be avoided (Sharan 2014).[13] One might argue that in Bhalla's work the Yamuna functioned as an "in-between" place, which, though precious and fertile to some (e.g., as provider of agricultural production, as ritual cremation ground, as site of ritual immersion), to others is a polluted space and burden; indeed, this is demonstrated in the fact that leisure use of its embankment is "restricted." In Bhalla's view, the river is "shunned" by the middle classes and the elite, and thus not a public but rather a marginalised and discriminated space. The highly mediated cleaning efforts by environmental groups or spiritual communities (e.g., *Meri Dilli Meri Yamuna*, transl. *My Delhi My Yamuna*—a large river-cleansing agitation organised by the religious-spiritual organisation *The Art of Living*) since 2010 reveal a growing desire to recover and include the river as a cleansed, reclaimed, and potentially rejuvenating (middle-class) leisure space, thereby triggering a reinterpretation of accessibility and ownership. Although stressing the importance of recovering the river and water's multiple meanings for a more complex understanding of nature's relevance for urban recreation, civil responsibility, and participation, as much as for the connectivity of religion and civil society, *Chabeel* was, interestingly enough, also one of the few artworks that dealt with religious practice in "secular" cities. The presence of religion in contemporary global art in India is closely tied up with notions of modernism and rationality and the tensions caused by a "political doctrine of secularism" that impacts contemporary art production (see Zitzewitz 2014: 5). As a consequence, the inclusion of religious themes in the secular field of gallery art is often accompanied by tensions, and/or blended out since it is predominantly associated with religious extremism played out in the public domain.

Urban imaginaries and experiences

> The ways in which they have woven together the different sites, it turned the city into a different space! (festival visitor, pers. comm., Delhi 2010)

My research was carried out between 2010 and 2014, a few years after *48°C* had taken place. Open interviews were conducted with stakeholders from the art and urban design fields, several of the participating artists from India, art critics, curators, filmmakers, and art scholars from Delhi. Many of my informants had strong memories of the festival sites as hospitable, tension-free, open spaces that invited social mingling and created a leisurely atmosphere for "hanging out" rather than hurrying through or by. The fact that the relatively new metro connected all sites and that mobility was part of the experience also contributed to a positive perception of the festival. This contrasts with

the often-felt anxieties usually connected to mobility and loitering in the city, particularly at nodal points of high fluctuation.

The connectivity of the eight chosen sites through a grid,[14] with each site hosting several of the artists,[15] in addition to the outreach programme, changed many (privileged) participants' perception of moving in and through the city. Though not directly intended, it especially appealed to middle-class women's experiences of restricted mobility and the tensions of living in the city. Divya Chopra, an urban designer involved in the URG, argued that restrictions and threats to mobility, the feeling of precarity in public—shared by many citizens but mainly raised by members of the educated middle classes—turned the festival into a space of potential *flânerie*. She expressed this view in a personal conversation while referring to *48°C* as a "carnival" (Divya Chopra, pers. comm., Delhi 2010). Such perceptions of temporary lightness and joyous celebration stand in contrast to the "normal" experiences of being overshadowed by the threat of male aggression that women live through on a daily basis. Public space is still largely a male-dominated domain; while new models for gendered behaviour and mobility have been facilitated since the economic liberalisation in the 1990s, tensions seem to have escalated as women have moved into—and appropriated—public space. Such zones of contestation are found particularly in "thoroughfares" for commuters, in governmental administrative or tourist sites, and in cinemas, business, and shopping centres of the kind found in and around Connaught Place (sometimes also referred to as Central Place), a prominent vestige of colonialism where four festival sites were located. This place at Delhi's centre has hardly any residential qualities; it is largely filled with "strangers" who commute in accordance with traffic hours and have little attachment to the localities. During the festival, Barakhamba Road, one of the major roads leading towards Connaught Place, was transformed to such an extent that, as Divya Chopra further elaborates, "I felt safe going there because there was light and there was a different kind of crowd that was coming to view public art." (Divya Chopra, pers. comm., Delhi 2010). The otherwise abandoned and seemingly unsafe place, particularly for women, shifted from a transitory, "loitering site" to being pleasant and recreational. But the appreciation of such a shift was not only gender based. Arunava Dasgupta noticed the following at another of the festival's sites located directly at Connaught Place:

> […] with Palika Parking, Andrej[16] has put up this spectacular place; in the evenings no one goes there, it is dark. But it was changed in the process of the three screens put up, the infrastructure changed, and transformed the place into a positive, fantastic, celebratory place, it has nothing to do with gentrification. We can do that with other critical places. (Arunava Dasgupta, pers. comm., Delhi 2010)

Because it has little residential and even local identification—it is part of a predominantly commercial area of New Delhi—the open areas on top of the underground market Palika Bazaar (built in the 1970s) turn the site into a "transit space." At daytime, it offers people a leisurely walk and a place to sit during their lunch break. However, after office closing hours and nightfall, Palika Bazaar carries the stigma of low-class, male crowds, the "crowd" Divya Chopra referred to that causes discomfort particularly among women. Others refer to it as a site where homeless people, drug addicts, and daily wagers assemble. A researcher from the URG explained that originally the more "upper-class" and "safe" part directly on the adjunct Central Park had been selected as a festival venue but due to anti-terrorist security measurements the plan had to be dropped (anonymous, pers. comm., Delhi 2014).

Dasgupta's comment underlines the desire for safe and relaxed access and use of public places in business areas. It also refers to the notion that not every form of improvement through culture must result in gentrification and the exclusion of lower-middle or low-class populations, quite the opposite. Thus, *48°C* could indeed facilitate aspirations towards a more engaged, positive, and liberal notion space. But whereas middle-class cosmopolitanism would often be associated with demands for "exclusive restriction," Dasgupta is far from claiming that public spaces like Connaught Place should be "cleansed" of "unruly" subjects like street vendors, or other representatives of lower and often stigmatised social strata. Instead, he privileges respect for and attention to social diversity and inclusion (Deutsche 1996, XIII). In a self-reflexive mode, he argues that

> [o]ur preoccupation has always been that we create public space for the public —but we are at a huge distance with our imaginations and the real citizenry […] I am not talking about a public, a singular space, but a city space, connections with a space, degrees of involvement, multiple in nature, cross-sectional in terms of representation. […] I want my students to have that connection with the city. […] We need to make people reconnect with the space. (Arunava Dasgupta, pers. comm., Delhi 2010)

Mobility and safety play a major role, both in terms of general public security and the role of women in public. While the former was a constant factor in negotiations with government offices and police, female visitors highlighted the latter—though not officially addressed at the festival—as relevant. Access to public space by means of a public art festival must not be taken for granted and reveals the contested and conflict-ridden nature of public space as highly regulated (Deutsche 1996). It took two years of intense planning, financing, and collaboration by two internationally active German organisations, and the

approval of high-level government bureaucrats and police in Delhi to realise the *48°C* festival, gain permissions to place the artworks in public, and allow large crowds to gather. When decisions were made to finance *48°C*, preparations were already ongoing with respect to the 2010 Commonwealth Games. The feat of organisational challenges is particularly impressive given that Delhi had recently been shaken by market place bombings in September 2008 and the city administration was fearful of more terrorist attacks and thus careful about the regulation of larger public assemblies. With respect to *48°C*, the festival organisers had to obtain seventy-five permits from thirty-five governmental agencies—an significant organisational challenge. In personal conversation, Dasgupta tells me that Connaught Place had been part of the festival, with six sites of public art exhibition, but because of a bomb blast there on 13 September 2008, the police did not give permission. He recalls that the neighbouring rooftop of Palika Bazar, which was turned into a public park, could remain an exhibition site, but only after tough negotiations with the local police. It was argued that the site was an important message to the visitors: they could trust public safety again: "We said that 'you decide: we want to hold a public event so that people gain back their faith and confidence in these spaces. And if you want to restrict it then it's crazy'" (2010). This way, Dasgupta argues, the festival turned from an intentionally bottom-up event to a "top-down" festival. Another aspect of access and mobility addressed by the festival was the middle-class's general reluctance to consider public space as productive rather than just "empty" or a "nuisance." The way in which the metro became not just a means of travel but an "attitude," and the care given to the site selection were seen as a call for a more appreciative and attentive understanding of the many different urban spaces and histories in the city. This was one rather pedagogical aspect of the festival agenda, which was geared towards the more affluent middle classes. Although moving through Delhi is a hassle for all citizens, members of the wealthy middle classes in particular consider public spaces (including public transport) to be unhealthy and filled with alleged "nuisances", including beggars, street vendors, roaming animals, cars, and unstructured, harassing crowds which should be generally avoided.

And yet, this celebration of seamless mobility is central to *48°C*. For many visitors taking the metro to visit sites in Old Delhi this may very well have shaped a new feeling for the city and its social and environmental ecology. According to the festival's curator, Sood, the aim was to "make these people who are used to taking cars explore the city in different ways" (GI 2008). In Delhi, mobility and status are closely linked; elite and upper-middle-class people associate walking and taking public transport with the "lower class." People "of class" more often than not avoid the public; they avoid being seen on streets lest they be associated with the "common man." In this context the

introduction of the metro system in Delhi has partly gentrified neighbourhoods, opened public space, and changed the idea of accessibility. In 2008 only two metro lines were (more or less) completed, and it was a herculean task for *48°C* organisers to use this network to designate the art sites so that people could visit eight sites in one day.[17] Through the use of the overground metro the city unfolds as a panorama; it enables people to move fairly quickly and easily through the city, while travelling by car often spells delays such as traffic congestion and can be risky. Public transport facilitates not only travel faster from point A to B but offer a different experience of one's self in space along with a different gaze upon the urban landscape. Ravi Agarwal, contributor to the *48°C* festival, describes his experience of using the metro and looking at nature:

> I feel that some of the spaces were always there, but they were "different" spaces then (before the metro). […] For example, there's a metro going over the forest now from Chhattarpur, Mehrauli to Gurgaon. And it goes over the forest, you know. So, suddenly you could see the forest. … With the metro, the city can be experienced differently. (Ravi Agarwal, pers. comm., Delhi 2010)

Gender-specific experiences must be considered as well, since women might not necessarily share the same ease with the metro (despite the introduction of ladies compartments), and affluent middle-class women largely prefer to take the car for safety and status reasons.

Deep waterscapes

As previously mentioned in relation to Chhachhi's and Bhalla's work, the importance of water in Delhi formed a key theme and narrative for many artists involved in *48°C*. Both *The Water Diviner* and *Chabeel* convey relational and deep histories of how water stands for so much more than a physical substance. The river as carrier of socio-cultural and religious practice and change also played a role in some of the eight international projects that were developed at the *48°C* festival. Two European artists, Sabine Haubitz (Berlin, Munich) and Stefanie Zoche (London, Munich), who have collaborated since 1998, developed *The Yamuna Blues*, which explored the ways in which we engage with the river as part of the public domain but also as part of cultural and religious heritage. Their film project viewed the river as a neglected yet key resource, one that had been partly destroyed by careless urban development, industrial waste, and a widespread ignorance of nature's public good (as opposed to nature as a religious domain used for purification rituals). That the dilapidated state of rivers such as the Yamuna has become an issue of concern for the affluent middle classes, who now see nature as important for recreation and leisure, must not be

ignored; indeed, this shift in attitudes signals the unique ability of art spaces to reshape sites of contestation and transgression. In *The Yamuna Blues*, water and the embankment become an "in-between" space that is fitted within the larger narrative and topography of *48°C*. Next to Kashmere Gate (see fig. 7d), where several other public art projects dealing with water were installed (e.g., Subodh Gupta's *Stainless Steel Bucket* and Atul Bhalla's *Chabeel*), a forty-foot high bamboo tower—a hybrid structure reminiscent of a watchtower or a lighthouse—was constructed; the construction style used for the tower was similar in many respects to large buildings—including high-rise buildings—built in urban India today. However, instead of sending light-encoded signals or highlighting the feeling of surveillance, a light beam was directed onto a projection screen on the floor simulating a "water pond." The images projected were recorded observations shot by Haubitz + Zoche over a period of two weeks on the route from Yamuna's source in Yamunotri to Delhi. Underwater shots that immerse the viewer in the water alternated with images of people's activities along the banks and with impressions of nature. The film depicts a river's transformation from clear to black water. Says Haubitz: "In India, the Yamuna is seen as [a] sacred river, as [a] goddess. [Against] this backdrop, the drifting remains of Durga figures, during Durga Puja—female headless straw-puppets, from a distance, looked like abused bodies —a symbolic reading that can be transferred to the ways in which people deal with the river" (pers. e-mail comm. 2014).

***Fig. 8a**: Haubitz + Zoche,* The Yamuna Blues*, 2008. Bamboo construction, video beamer, HD-Video, loop 10 min. Delhi, Kashmere Gate.*

***Fig. 8b**: Detail of the projection. Haubitz + Zoche,* The Yamuna Blues*, 2008. Bamboo construction, video beamer, HD-Video, loop 10 min. Delhi, Kashmere Gate.*

***Fig. 8c**: Selection of stills from the projected film. Haubitz + Zoche,* The Yamuna Blues*, 2008. Bamboo construction, video beamer, HD-Video, loop 10 min. Delhi, Kashmere Gate.*

To the artists, the paradox of treating the river both as sacred and polluted was mirrored in the figures, albeit ignoring that in processions such as Durga Puja, the immersion of the deities in water and their deterioration is part of the ritual cycle and not perceived as neglect by the worshippers. In an interview, Haubitz + Zoche stated that one of the problems in the attitude of (middle-class) Indians towards the river is that they do not see the river and its embankment as contributing to the public good, or even as a spiritual and physical zone of recreation and leisure. Scenes of worship on and by the river (perceived as pollution by some middle-class Indians, since *puja* flowers are thrown in with plastic bags) present "for an outsider view… a very strong contradiction" of this perspective. The suggestion is that for many people who live in Delhi the river is not a significant part of the local topography, whereas "[i]n Munich, we always cycle along the river, it is nice to be close to the river, so part of our psychological experience of this space is to have this really wonderful river" (Bose 2009b, interview). Considering nature and natural resources as contributing to a "common good," and as something worth protecting, nurturing, and respecting, is not necessarily contradictory to religious practices. However, in the context of secularisation and decolonisation, national progress and nature's protection have formed an ambivalent alliance that has often facilitated the exploitation and destruction of natural resources as well as their conversion into a "luxury good" that can only be accessed by a privileged few. Whether it is a gated community or a theme park, these new sites are presented as eco-friendly and nurturing biodiversity. Amita Baviskar (2002; 2010) has called this phenomenon "bourgeois environmentalism." She argues that access to nature has become increasingly privatised and commodified, and that nature is increasingly appreciated because of this conspicuous connection to leisure for people with the necessary symbolic and economic capital.

The development of river embankments as sites of recreation, cultivation, and leisure, as practiced in cities such as London, Paris, and Berlin, is new to the South Asian context (Hubermann 2012). Today these cities are known for their famous embankments and have increasingly undergone deindustrialisation and gentrification in areas that were previously neglected and stigmatised. The presence of nature is crucial to attracting investment in cities, particularly for the affluent classes. The encroachment of the Commonwealth Games Village (2010) or the Akshardham Temple (2005) on the "preserved" territory of the Yamuna floodplains is one incident that underscores the growing pressures of the real estate market (Brosius 2014). In the 1990s Malhotra Jagmohan, the then vice chairman of the Delhi Development Authority, developed a plan to transform Delhi into the "Paris of the East" by recreating the embankment of the Yamuna in the city centre. This led to the demolition of "illegal" encroachments housing more than half a million people.

Trees as icons

Urban deforestation—another central topic of *48°C*—is a paradoxical issue in light of the fact that, since the early 2000s, the Delhi government has branded the city as the "greenest city in India." This has been achieved through the relocation of hundreds of thousands of people, for instance from along the river embankment. South Indian artist Krishnaraj Chonat acknowledged this upheaval, and the theme of his installation was thus one of uprooting, dislocation, and "resettlement." This was represented by one tree hanging, like a person, from a crane positioned at Barakhamba Road, next to an abandoned colonial bungalow. Its daytime appearance and the spectacular way the tree was lit up at night, offered different visions of the city.

***Fig. 9a–b**: Krishnaraj Chonat,* Crane + Tree*, 2008. Uprooted, dead tree, crane. Delhi, Barakhamba Road.*

Since 2000, around 200,000 trees have been cut down to make way for residential and commercial, road, and metro constructions in Delhi. Barakhamba Road, a prominent festival site, was once an avenue framed by large trees. Most of these trees were uprooted during the construction of the metro and when the southern part of the city's colonial heart in Connaught Place was transformed into a business district.

***Fig. 10a–b**: Barakhamba Road in Delhi, 2013.*

Today the road leading towards Connaught Place is a busy thoroughfare that bustles with white-collar workers and street vendors during the daytime, but is deserted at night. The key queries presented by Chonat's *Crane + Tree*, which stands adjacent to one of the last deserted colonial bungalows now squeezed between several high-rise office blocks, are related to different notions of development and progress and to questions of how much nature should be sidelined and sacrificed to make way for national and urban progress.[18]

In a conversation with filmmaker Krishnendu Bose, Chonat mentions the challenge for an artist who is used to working in gallery spaces to suddenly expose his art to a large public; he asks whether such an artwork really matters to the man on the street (Bose 2009b). The work received both praise for its monumentality and criticism for being too "iconic" and for addressing—albeit very affectively—especially the urban upper middle classes with this language of spectacle. In other words, the assumption was that the affluent middle class do not care about trees vanishing from public places as long as their local parks remain untouched, whereas "ordinary" people, many of them migrants from villages and forest areas, were more likely to be familiar with this destruction. Responding to my question about the critique of his work as elitist monumentalism, Chonat responded:

> When thinking about what kind of work I would make in this "space" that could speak to a great mix of peoples and positions, I felt it should be something very symbolic, encapsulating all these concerns. I wanted to somehow combine a certain directness with subtlety in this artwork that touched upon the sense of loss, of great absence in the collective consciousness of people who would experience this "sudden insertion" in their otherwise often overlooked everyday reality. In other words, to explore the possibility of putting a soul "up there" that one gazed at in awe and reverence, as if looking at a shrine, a suspended deity or something like that. A higher thing, a *sahasrara* (white lotus, CB) perhaps […] here endangered (pers. email comm., 2014).

The emphatic appeal to save trees was, nonetheless, appreciated by many middle-class visitors, and the fact that the media paid so much attention to these "branded" and precarious sites might have, despite the critiques, also played a part in changing people's minds. In this context, the criticism that *48°C* was merely the offspring of neoliberal environmentalism and concepts of creative cities (Leslie 2005) monopolised by a highly monolithic notion of an elitist middle class that has no "real" connection with the workings of vernacular everyday life, seems one dimensional.

Focus 2: State and non-state contestations

The second part of this paper explores public art as inhabiting the space between institutionalised, national venues and informal, open infrastructures—particularly with respect to the issue of public urban space controlled by the state versus vernacular space managed by subaltern or civil forces from (often) bourgeois backgrounds (Deutsche 1996, XXI). *48°C* has played a major role in challenging dominant space regulations because it occurred when conservative institutional canons and sites such as museums were being challenged by the new dynamics of economic liberalisation and a growing alternative "white cube" art scene in the 1990s (Deutsche argues that public art must not necessarily be identified with democratisation of space and participation [1996, XXII–III]). Temporary space use thus became an important means of inserting controversial themes into familiar environments and of allowing new art forms and urban imaginaries to take shape.

Between old city and new city

Sudipta Kaviraj and others have explored colonial town planning, particularly with respect to the creation of "in-between" spaces such as the *maidan*. One of the largest open spaces, the Ramlila Maidan, was chosen by Dutch artist Friso Witteveen for his installation entitled *Hocus Pocus*. It is yet another space that is sandwiched between two capitals, urban ecologies, and models of habitat: the Walled City of Shahjahanabad (founded in 1648) and New Delhi (founded in 1912). The *maidan* was part of colonial urban planning and functioned as a buffer zone between the so-called black town and the white town. Many of Delhi's open, green spaces can be traced back to the Mughal period when walled gardens and waterways became sites of elite power and leisure; or to the period when Delhi was declared the new capital of the empire in 1911, catalysing the mapping of a new spatial landscape of power—axes for parades or government buildings—that were meant to foster "decent, civilised, cultivated urban living" (Kaviraj 1996, 91). Today, Ramlila Maidan has once again become a zone for temporary uses; it is one of the rare sites designated for the *aam admi* (common men/citizenry). Indeed, it is a truly multifunctional and socially diverse space and still hosts large religious festivals (*Ramlila, Dusserah*), circuses, cricket matches on Sunday afternoons or weekday evenings, public meetings (*sabha*), demonstrations, and rallies. As the URG team explains:

> This idea of an "in-between" urban border zone trapped within the city becomes a unique condition of urban life that allows the mutual existence of the recognized world of the formal city and the not so accepted but real and alive aspects of the informal (grey /in-between) city. (URG, Data File, 35)

***Fig. 11a**: The images shows that the installation was gated, thus cutting off a large chunk of the public space for protection purposes. Friso Witteveen,* Hocus Pocus*, 2008. Mild steel, MDF Reflective foil and paint, 24 x 20 x 4 m. Delhi, Ramlila Ground.*

***Fig. 11b**: Friso Witteveen,* Hocus Pocus*, 2008. Mild steel, MDF Reflective foil and paint, 24 x 20 x 4 m. Delhi, Ramlila Ground.*

After visiting all the possible festival sites during a preliminary stay in summer where he was accompanied by and could also tap into the research of the URG team, Witteveen selected the Ramlila Maidan. The outcome was a monumental and yet poetic engagement with the past and the present of the growing city, inviting people to reflect on their position between the "old" and the "new," between the "unordered" or "informal," and the "regulated." Employing reflective material and citations from Mughal architecture that also suggest proximity to high-rise buildings with glass surfaces, Witteveen created a play with different temporalities and spatialities. (*One object*) *Pocus* opens up like a blossoming flower to the city around it, reflecting it, while (*the second one*) *Hocus*, with inverted mirror-like surfaces, reflects itself and the viewer standing inside, allowing him/her to see his/her own image within the architectural landscape, and feeling, as the artist puts it, the "heat of the city" (Bose 2009b). The installation plays with elements appropriated from the eighteenth century heritage site of the Jantar Mantar,[19] particularly the inner circles of the Ram Yantra buildings, to the south of Connaught Place. The architectural element of the Ram Yantra became the conceptual basis for Witteveen's *Hocus Pocus*, reflecting the Hindi words *Jantar Mantar*, which are seen to be a corruption of *yantra mantra*; in ritual, *yantra* is a spatial representation of the divine or the occult and *mantra* is its auditory form, so Witteveen in a personal e-communication (June 2015).[20] As a consequence of extreme security measurements taken by the Delhi government following terrorist bomb attacks in Mumbai, as well as bomb blasts in Delhi ahead of the festival, public spaces were closed off and heavily controlled. For *Hocus Pocus*, this meant that it was literally "fenced off" and thus, unintentionally, turned into a "gated" work with restricted access. It is yet another result of the festival's aspiration to open up public spaces from the "bottom up" at a time when various factors, e.g., the fear of terrorist attacks, brought about the closure and surveillance of such sites "top-down" (Dasgupta, above).

Taxidermy inside and outside the museum

An interesting case study for the exploration of how government institutions today regulate space and thus to some extent the imaginaries of national identity, is Ravi Agarwal's work *Extinct*. Over the past ten years the artist, originally from New Delhi, has made the interesting transition from environmental activist and documentary photographer to artist and, of late, curator. He has worked with art installations that address issues such as declining industries and labour conditions in the context of high capitalism as well as pollution and farming, often with a focus on the river Yamuna. His own work has been exhibited abroad, for instance at *documenta 11* (2002), curated by Okwui Enwezor, or in the travelling exhibition *Indian Highway* (Bublatzky 2011).

Agarwal's work for *48°C* was research based and dealt with Delhi's last three remaining vultures—stuffed and preserved in a diorama in the Natural History Museum near Connaught Place. Since their eradication from the city—due to the presence of Diclofenac in the bodies of milk-giving animals, according to Agarwal—vultures can now be seen only as taxidermied curiosities. Once, the vulture, a docile and harmless animal as Agarwal underlines, inhabited everyday spaces but its association with death, cadavers, and putrefaction, clashed with notions of "world class" hygiene and aesthetics, which ultimately lead to its extermination. Agarwal's reference to the museum dioramas can be understood as a critique of the colonial ethos and the national as well as capitalist rhetoric of progress and development: the ossified state of this remarkable bird of prey mirrors the state of nature and thus of civilisation. The elements in the large installation can also be understood as a gesture towards the ambivalence of "progress" as an evolutionary or destructive way of urban change (Bose 2009b). The diorama and projections in front of the Museum of Natural History speak volumes in their proximity to Mandi House, the headquarters of Indian national television, as well as the major national museums, which were established after India's independence and were expected to facilitate national progress through national education.

***Fig. 12a**: Ravi Agarwal,* Extinct*, 2008. Photographic and light-box installation, images, text and video. Delhi, Mandi House Chauraha.*

***Fig. 12b–c**: Ravi Agarwal,* Extinct*, 2008. Photographic and light-box installation, images, text and video. Delhi, Mandi House Chauraha.*

By exhibiting site-specific photographic and light box installations that refer to the historical presence of vultures in the city, Agarwal confronts issues that include the precarious relationship between humans and nature, or the ambivalent potential in the idea of development. In conversation with filmmaker Bose, he asks how one can contemplate the future of the city if extinction becomes so much part of one's lives that it almost seems natural (Bose 2009b). *Extinct* was installed on a roundabout in front of the museum where it formed a very different memorial from the monuments of national remembrance (commemorating heroes and events) that are normally found on such prominent urban sites. It could also be argued that the vultures as museum objects across the road from the exhibit on the roundabout can turn the installation into an extension and reconfiguration of the museum experience—carried forward and imbued with new signification, rather than challenged or dismantled.[21] The importance of active civil participation and the need to question the definition, and destruction, of what is deemed a "nuisance" by a few, was thus highlighted. Agarwal took the stuffed animals out of the sanitised space of the museum and "reanimated" them by placing them in soundscapes and magnified slide projections in front of the national museum. His intention was to provoke reflection on the "fake" realities of dioramas, which aim at creating the illusion of realism and presence, while the "original" has been lost forever. Agarwal sought to use the notion of loss as an appeal to viewers: Where is a city going when it builds such destruction into its profile? If you extinguish and render irrelevant the habitats of flora and fauna, as well as humans, what is lost through the progress of urban development? Is this evolution "natural?" Agarwal's work also addressed the fact that dressing something up as a diorama, or turning it into a monument, enforces a different perspective of it altogether—one of distance and ossification instead of dialogue and mobility. He played with the canonised and familiar (museum, photograph, monument, or diorama) and inserted the unfamiliar by obscuring what are usually clear boundaries and temporalities: the vultures, up until only a few years ago, alive and perched in the trees and on buildings next to the Natural History Museum, were re-imported into their natural habitat as copies. He also sought to expand the boundaries of the traditional monument and the monumental genre by inviting other forms of contemplation and engagement and thus enforcing "counter-hegemonic" ways of seeing (Burk 2006, 952). *Extinct* was not alone in this at *48°C* where the artist Vivan Sundaram, who created the public art project *Flotage* in the Mughal-style Roshanara garden located north of Old Delhi, critiqued a museum and state-based way of creating and imposing knowledge flows from the top down: "We still have the notion that public art is (as follows): you put a statue on a pedestal and a roundabout and that's public art" (Bose 2009b).[22] This statement, one could argue, is less a critique of who or what is put on a pedestal and why at any given time,

than of the ways in which this gestures towards a top-down rhetoric that discourages the participation of the citizenry. (According to Sundaram, one aim of contemporary art should be to surprise and to generate questions and curiosity [Bose 2009b.]) New public art inhabits the space between older and coexisting forms of public art, such as folklore and religious art or monuments of national or historical relevance, the former is usually placed outside the secular public sphere, while the latter is often an inextricable part of the hegemonic and didactic canon (Guha-Thakurta 2011, see also Watson 2008). Such complexity corresponds closely with Adrienne Burk's argument for the "beneath and before" of "publicness" in urban public art, using Vancouver as her case study (2006, 961). In personal conversation, Agarwal supported the view that a festival like *48°C* can shape new public spaces to accommodate participatory approaches that move beyond the confines of monumental and hegemonic art and beyond the restriction of art engagement to national canons and to the gallery and museum:

> I remember the first meetings with Pooja (Sood), we met the secretary of the ministry of environment and he said: "So, you want to hang up paintings? On a flyover?" And I said: "Well, no, not exactly paintings. […]" They could not think of anything else! The recognition that art can be not just that, you know, that shift was happening with *48°*. […] So, I think it's a good thing, at least […] "public art" becomes part of the public dictionary and people start thinking about it. They might not totally understand it, so it'll take many more of those things, you know? It'll take a few years of constant working at that. (Ravi Agarwal, pers. comm., Delhi 2010)

In order to get the project up and running, one of the first hurdles was to disentangle the divergent meanings attributed to public space and public art from associations with the government. As the artist Sheba Chhachhi, who created *The Water Diviner* in Chandni Chowk's Public Library in Old Delhi, puts it: "Public space communication is largely […] government propaganda […] I think the state always (assumed, it) owned the public space" (in conversation with filmmaker Krishnendu Bose [Bose 2009b; Adajania 2008]).

Evidently, the idea of what constitutes public art and public space radically differed between bureaucrats and the *48°C* representatives. The risk that the government would refuse requests for installation access to urban spaces for a host of reasons was always substantial. In conversation, a core project coordinator and co-curator of *48°C* described how the organisers tried to ensure that the government would open up the selected spaces:

> This was an amazing gesture, and never really happened like this before! First we had to get their general approval and familiarize them with the overall idea/concept. We made dummies for them, breaking down every site, put it on a map. We had to argue that Indian contemporary art is booming so much right now, that environment is a "hot topic." They were actually quite open, and they knew that these were big issues, very popular at the time […] (protocol notes form conversation with anonymized team worker to *48°C*, 2010).

The quote also hints at the city's growing desire in 2007 to rebrand itself as "world class," and to use art and culture and the issue of climate change to effect this. Agarwal's account of his interactions with government employees who assumed that public art meant hanging pictures on bridge walls indicates that city officials were wading into new territory with *48°C*, but it was not just bureaucrats who were challenged. A co-curator of *48°C* also explained that Indian artists are often "uncomfortable" with the idea of public art, with having to put themselves "out there," and with coming out from behind the sheltered walls of the "white cube" into the open to confront an unknown audience and to be measured against other points of reference. Public art in this context has a function that is almost diametrically opposed to the rather monolingual messages conveyed in national memorials, which are still very much based on a "national canon" and on notions of a past "golden age" or "heritage." The audience envisaged by *48°C*'s organisers was clearly not a national citizen in this "classical" sense, but rather a critical citizen who appreciates complexity and subversion.

The purpose of this section has been to explore the arts festival *48°C* as an "in-between" space that marks, and challenges, different positionalities in hegemonic national discourses and institutions as well as alternative publics. This slippage between what might also be termed official and unofficial, dominant and demotic, allows us to further excavate aspects of how urban public space is constituted.

Focus 3: Protest spaces

> I think that the state always owned the public space. [But over time, CB], it's become more aggressive about its ownership and legislation […] There is an attempt to manage the city and that has actually ended up in reducing public space […] you (now) have in fact the reverse process where increased police control are generating a passive citizenry which simply consumes whether it is advertising or state propaganda or spectacle (Sheba Chhachhi, in conversation with Krishnendu Bose [2009b]).

This statement by Sheba Chhachhi brings the issue of restriction of artworks into the larger realm of public protest. By addressing the issue of civil participation, the artist's words recall the quote by Adajania at the beginning of this article. Several of the Indian artists involved in *48°C* had been active in political and social movements for years, if not decades, and many of their works responded to their concerns in this context. The experience of placing art in public and of addressing themes and publics outside the "white cube," is often associated with experiences of pushing against the boundaries erected by the state apparatus and against various local challenges such as religious extremism or land grabbing. Worldwide, large cities have seen the rejuvenation of their main squares as protest grounds, both in the "global south" as well as in the "global north." This is paralleled by increasing attempts by police and other government initiatives to control and restrict public spaces in order to keep unruly crowds from entering the arena of public (and media) visibility. In Delhi, demonstrations have been largely restricted to two places since the 1980s: the Ramlila Maidan and Parliament Road near Jantar Mantar, close to Connaught Place and Parliament. The former is large and the latter is a narrow dead-end street usually bustling with metro commuters, but what both have in common is that they are "gated" and cannot be seen by large groups of onlookers who might want to join in. Police are wary of demonstrations and protests are heavily restricted. Ramlila Grounds formed the stage for enormous and unprecedented anti-corruption protests in 2011, but Jantar Mantar Road, the small lane near Parliament, was ignored for the first time in decades when massive protests by youths across all social strata of the middle classes filled Rajpath, the huge avenue connecting Parliament with India Gate south of Connaught Place, following the brutal gang-rape of a young female student in Central Delhi on 16.12.2012 (the rape victim died of her fatal injuries, triggering an ongoing discussion channelled through different media about women's safety in urban space). While civil protest is something to be managed by governments in cities across the globe, the fear of terrorism in the new millennium is another more pressing issue. In the case of *48°C*, it caused many bureaucratic problems for the organisers of the event. The experience of dealing with highly regulated space when it comes to public art projects can be seen in the reflections of members of the organising team. Permissions had to be acquired from all kinds of departments and responsible bureaucrats and politicians. As Divya Chopra (URG) explains, "There had to be ten different official permissions for each site. You cannot just come and plop a work of art in public space"; the police, fire brigade, and sometimes also the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) had to be approached for approval and the designs for the different sites had to be explained to the officials. In fact, permissions remained a key topic up to the day before the opening of the festival. One issue was the security alert caused by bomb blasts in Delhi in

November 2008, which was further intensified by the Mumbai bomb blasts earlier that year. As a result, police and other security personnel were very sensitive about "gatherings," even in the context of a festival, and sought to avoid them by means of restriction, particularly around the Central Business District, Connaught Place. Space policing became part of a larger debate amongst a core group of artists and curators about the spatial restrictions faced by critical crowds and how this controversial tactic affects art and activism in a space. Furthermore, the discourse surrounding the closing down of public space and the eviction of protesting publics, which is addressed in Deutsche's essay on agoraphobia, is another aspect that deserves attention. Deutsche proposes a leftist nostalgic view of public space as somehow "more authentic" and democratic before the advent of high capitalism, which ushered in an era of authoritarian group control (and states) and sanitised spaces (Deutsche 1996, 282–4). This situates protest spaces and movements within a temporal frame and allows for a consideration of generational agendas and experiences.

Centre-periphery entanglement

Protest as a metaphor and as a translocal narrative featured in many works at *48°C*, particularly in documentary filmmaker Amar Kanwar's video and photo installation *The Sovereign Forest*.

***Fig. 13**: Amar Kanwar,* The Sovereign Forest*, 2008. Installation, video screens, 160 photographs shown in forty-nine light boxes, text banner. Delhi, Jantar Mantar Road.*

Located at the entrance to Jantar Mantar Road, the work in progress revolved around the theme of denied citizenship and restricted participation in the context of land disputes, the violent exploitation of natural resources, and the abuse of human rights through governmental and commercial agendas and privileges. It also reflects the physical and symbolic distance of the people of India to their parliament as their protests are confined to this marginalised and almost hidden street between Parliament and Connaught Place. Although Kanwar's protagonists (with whom he has been collaborating for years, also on levels of political activism) are members of marginalised communities, such as *adivasi* (tribals) in remote areas of the national territory, the underlining argument was that their struggles are everyone's concern and must be faced and explored in places like Delhi. Kanwar's work argued that the state conducts a war against its own people and makes the natural resources and habitations of the *Oriyans* its battleground. He also suggested that the driving force behind this war were the industrial interventions that have taken place in disputed areas since 1999. Kanwar centred his work not just on documentation but also on self-reflection and contemplation of the ways in which such conflicts are seen, dealt with, and ignored. The public art project he developed for *48°C* assembled various landscapes of violence and witnessing: the artist placed his work—video screens, 160 photographs shown in forty-nine light boxes, and one text banner, which told stories about the displacement of populations and protest movements across the country (e.g., *Oriyan* tribes resistance to attempts to convert nature into industry)—around a single and sacred *pipul* tree growing on a triangular island. The films shown under the tree told stories of assassination, murder, and funerals of leaders of subaltern movements that had been killed by those whose interests support displacement and exploitation of people and natural resources (Bose 2009b). For the ten days of the festival, Kanwar insists, the triangular site, embedded within Delhi's topography of protest, and often anger and violence, became a space for conversations and even contemplation, inviting both commuters and protesters to invoke "another space." Kanwar observed that even in what he calls a "harsh city" like Delhi, people respond positively when an open space is offered (Bose 2009b). This public artwork was not just about protests outside of Delhi; Kanwar also addressed the issue of public space as protest space within the city. Since he grew up in Delhi and associates himself with different campaigns or moments in Delhi's history, the city as a place that enables protest formed a key theme in his project. It also reflected the history of shifting protest spaces from the Boat Club at Rajghat[23] in front of India Gate and close to Parliament and the prime minister's office to Jantar Mantar Road. The art project site is an allegorical microcosm of the protests enacted by citizens with a variety of concerns all over India. It seeks to expose a situation where representatives sent to claim their "right" of freedom find themselves more or less hidden from view. Every day groups

and assemblies come to show their dissent in the area where Kanwar's public art project was situated. Thus, in Kanwar's work, we see both an engagement with scenes of conflict at the "felt periphery" of the nation's territory, and with spaces and scopes of protest at the heart of the nation, the capital itself. What emerges is a temporary space and imaginary topography that allows for engagement with the idea of "performative" (see Adajania's citation at the beginning of this paper) and participating citizenship.[24] Artist and activist Chhachhi too stresses the point that while the 1980s witnessed a confident occupation of public space, for instance, within the women's movement's anti-dowry protest, public space in recent years has been facing increased policing. She argues that this shapes a passive citizenry with "protest in areas of designated dissent" (Bose 2009b). Although *48°C* envisaged that it would facilitate and shape a sense of collective and solidaric ownership of the city, it was impossible to pinpoint exactly who those publics should and could be. Possibly, this challenge was also not presupposed since only in the process of putting the festival together and watching the different "stages" of public art engagement unfold, was the fragmented ownership of and ways of belonging to the city spelt out, very often differently in the individual artworks. This also applies to the other activities (e.g., workshop, eco-walks), and even the tricky politics of getting permits and finding, to borrow Clifford Geertz' concept, "thick" sites.

Concluding thoughts

An art festival like *48°C* in a city like Delhi provides a useful lens through which to observe the fabric of public space when it is accessed, shaped, and even contested by artists, activists, and different publics, in order to imagine a future for "their" city, for their lives. Public space, as we have seen in the three parts of this article, is certainly not linear or one-dimensional. And it is precarious as much as it is precious. Most festival sites were "public" only once permits were granted, after gates and minds were opened, and all kinds of boundaries were shifted. A commentator in Bose's film *The Latent City* says that she never thought it would be so difficult to find public spaces in Delhi, for so much of what they thought was "there" and available, turned out to be regulated, encroached, denied. It might not be productive to diagnose the state of public space solely through polarising terms like "there" or "not there," "vanishing" and "extinct." "In betweenness" is marked by its temporal and fluid character through which the fabrics of the past, different forms of space use and space restriction, and corresponding imaginaries (e.g., of pluralist modernity or civil society) can surface. Temporary space use might be a more appropriate approach to consider qualities and hierarchies of "public" space. As indicated above with reference to Zitzewitz and Guha-Thakurta, there

are various notions of public space that are aligned with the epistemological trajectories that triggered the way artists, curators', and other agents involved in organising art events that "take place," conceive of art's role in society. Many of the artist's projects were either intended to change the visitors' perspective on places or to draw their attention to other layers of spatial past and practice. For a short period, *48°C* functioned as a magnifying glass on the selected sites, and excavated stories and voices that would otherwise remain silent, forgotten, or repressed. The artworks discussed here facilitated communication between places and people across the sites that were themselves linked by the metro. Whether they spoke to all people and publics alike is questionable, particularly since the exclusivist mechanism of globalised contemporary art was largely upheld. So while the curation of the city along the eight sites was probably an expansion of mobility and a form of gaining access to previously unvisited places for many members of the educated and English-speaking middle classes, this was but one perspective. Many ordinary people would not have chosen to visit all the sites in one go, thus experiencing the artworks as they travelled through a space they would normally traverse as commuters or consumers, or daily wagers, and schoolchildren. The "we" coined in the quote at the beginning of this article, imagining a different city, a more inclusive city, is thus an imaginary emblem and aspiration. It remains part of a particular perspective of "publicness" and/as "in betweenness;" of a very "learned" patchwork of experts—be they curators, artists, or researchers who are familiar with idioms of exclusive forms of knowledge. It is from this perspective that the combination of art, city, and ecology makes sense. But regardless of this limitation, one may argue, at least a connection was made, a thought process started, and a possibility of emplacing more diverse ways of belonging to and participating in the city's future was opened up.

The ambivalences and tensions of urban "closure" and "restriction" shaping public spaces is somewhat reflected in the translation of gallery art into public spaces. So while one argument could certainly be that the festival reflected a certain conservatism and bourgeois panic (the loss of natural resources and urban recreation for an elite middle class), it also opened chances for new and demotic ways of thinking about the fabric of public space, the right of access to environment in a "global" city. The works of artists like Bhalla or Chhachhi, for instance, allowed for the manifold layers of history and spatial meaning to merge in performative correspondence. Agarwal's work challenged the willingness of many citizens to tolerate extinction and their assumption that taxidermy can cover the loss. Chonat and Kanwar pointed out the violence that accompanies economic growth and wealth. Haubitz + Zoche, as well as Witteveen, played with zones of liminality between public and private, religious and secular. All artists dealt—not so much in a didactic but rather in

a poetic fashion—with a whole spectrum of ways in which people have used spaces and natural resources in the past and how they use them today. Thus, "in betweenness" surfaces as a relevant spatial practice—maybe because of its intangibility and temporality.

48°C must not be seen as an isolated moment; as previously mentioned, its predecessors include SAHMAT and the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival, and there are numerous events that succeeded it (though I particularly mention the Delhi-based ones that underline self-reflexive elements). Many of my informants agreed that *48°C* was a benchmark in the delineation of public art initiatives in India and emphasised that today (2014) it is easier to initiate public art events because of it. This was partly due to the festival organisers' tenacity in realising their vision and to the government's burgeoning understanding that such events throw a positive light on the city; that public art is more than just "hanging paintings on walls" or "placing statues at a roundabout." A case in point is the more recent festival entitled *Yamuna.Elbe* (2012, see http://yamuna-elbe.org/ and http://yamuna-elbe.de/), which had some issues with permits in the planning stage but generally enjoyed the support of the city government. Ironically, the exhibition was executed on a site by the river Yamuna that had witnessed massive demolition of informal settlements in the first decade of the new millennium to make space for a gated leisure and bio-park. Large festivals like *48°C* have, however, not been curated anymore, but the financial dimension, the sheer scale, and organisational demands might have improved the infrastructure for smaller, more compact public art projects addressing key topics that are regularly initiated with assistance from similar organisations. None of these, unfortunately, has drawn upon the expertise of researchers such as Arunava Dasgupta and his team from the School of Planning and Architecture. Such collaboration might have led to a more sustained engagement with social change and spatialisation as well as what public art's role in this could be. By now, the files and maps produced by the URG are "archival data," an unused repository with much scope for further exploration.

In addition to "temporary space use," and allowing for various kinds of emplacement and perspectives, public space can also be approached as a transit zone or an excavation site, a liminal space that contains different experiences, memories, and imaginaries in the city where diverse groups can make their way along well-trodden—or newly hewn—paths. In this sense it resembles Guattari and Deleuze's notion of the rhizomatic "in betweeness" of space. This is also part of the visibility, facilitated by both researchers from the SPA or the artworks themselves, of what has "fallen" or "slipped" between the cracks of space and time and subsequently been forgotten. *48°C* formed an "in-between" space in many ways: First, it was temporal and intangible—

it surfaced for a short time and then vanished. Second, it created various opportunities for artists and citizens to look at, shape, and read spaces in "their" city and to relate to these spaces and to art in public differently. Third, it could not be reduced to binary oppositions such as "local" or "global," "private" or "public," but had to be understood as a vertical and horizontal landscape that connected a range of translocal spatial references and historical memories. Last but not least, an excavation of the different sites and works of art revealed a rich and somewhat paradoxical set of interrelational histories of "public space" particularly in the context of notions like ownership, participation, and access. These histories overlap and compete; they cannot be reduced to one model, despite the fact that a modernist discourse of bourgeois cosmopolitan space or dogmatic secularism is most prevalent and holds the most currency both in urban planning and contemporary art. In the epigraph to this essay Adjanaia states that "every claim on public space is a claim on the public imagination;" in light of this art festival, and the complex histories it implies, we would propose that this requires a pluralistic and open-ended urban imaginary.

Notes

* I would like to thank the peer reviewers and the journal editors for their very constructive help. Thanks also to the artists featured in this piece for generously providing images of their works and for their feedback on the article. Much gratitude is owed to the Goethe Institut Delhi, especially to Robin Mallick and Dr. Dreyer, to Pooja Sood, Arunava Dasgupta, Divya Chopra, and Krishnendu Bose.

1. My use of "fine art," for lack of a better term, aims at defining art production that is usually made for consumption in galleries and museums and is distinguished from "popular" art—that is, artworks produced for religious purposes or political communication. I am aware of the problematic nature of these terms and conscious of their blurred boundaries.

2. With the term "public art," I refer to what the art historian Geeta Kapur has defined as "project-based events where artists are invited to stage their interventions in public space […] to evoke viewer-participation" (Pariat 2009). This initiative is rooted in the Global North and began in the 1960s. But as the artist Amar Kanwar, who also participated in *48°C* (see below), argues, public art is about the "blind spot" that many middle-class cosmopolitans have for the long and deep history of art in public, which is often referred to as "little" tradition, or as "folk art," "popular art," or "kitsch" (Amar Kanwar, pers. comm., 2011). This theme requires more locally specific research, which would enable a more differentiated discussion of "public" as a predominantly Western perception or as a locally appropriated one, thereby allowing for a reconsideration of the concepts of "patronage," "vernacular" art practices, religious art, etc. SAHMAT's important role cannot be further investigated in the framework of this article. See http://www.sahmat.org [Accessed on 22. July 2015].

3. For a detailed documentation of the project, including transciptions of conversations and video work, see http://studio.camp/event.php?this=motornama, http://pad.ma/TK/player/00:04:05.523 [Accessed on 27. June 2015].

4. The main informants of this study are professionals from museum and curating circuits, the artists themselves as well as urban designers. Interviews were conducted between 2010–2014.

5. For a variety of reasons (e.g., lack of time at the site or in preparing the work, unfamiliarity with Delhi etc.), not all of the artists were able to achieve this. The Urban Resource Group was made up of more than three dozen students and former students from the TVB School of Habitat Studies and the Department of Urban Design, SPA. Each festival site was researched and documented by one group and a mentor, and a core group produced a report. Artists were briefed on various aspects of the festival by members of the core group, e.g., K. T. Ravindran, Arunava Dasgupta, Divya Chopra, but also Pooja Sood. After the first round of visits, artists sent their concepts of proposed works including the preferred sites. Artists were able to make a second visit to the designated site to further fine tune the proposals. Final curating and financial issues (budget for project production) was handled by KHOJ. (Information provided by Divya Chopra, in an email conversation, March 2015).

6. The budget for this event was €450,000. See http://eco-publicart.org/48-degrees-celsius/ [Accessed on 14. November 2014].

7. Building on Guattari and Deleuze, an "in-between" space can also be seen as a zone that connects multiple spaces, not necessarily in an traceable linear movement from A to B, but rather as a "… a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one and the other way, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle" (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, 25) and blurs the distinct, even when it claims to do otherwise. "Liminality" is a concept from ritual studies coined by Victor Turner to underline the moment of transition, often turning an order on its head, with no clear view of what the outcome might be.

8. SAHMAT (Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust) reaches out to publics across different social strata through performances, exhibitions, the publication of books, posters, and the production of audio-video materials. For more information about their activities up to 2009, see http://www.sahmat.org/20years%20of%20sahmat.pdf [Accessed on 22. July 2015].

9. These include organisation-sponsored, individual elements of the festival such as performances, symposia, and guided walks.

10. Talk by Pooja Sood at Experimenter Curator's Hub 2014 (https://vimeo.com/105335506) [Accessed on 11. April 2015].

11. Lucie Ainsworth. 2008. "48 Degrees Celsius," Curating Cities database, http://eco-publicart.org/48-degrees-celsius/ [Accessed on 27. June 2015]. Ainsworth is assistant curator at Art & Design department, UNSW Sydney. See also http://www.niea.unsw.edu.au/research-area/public-culture [Accessed on 22. July 2015].

12. The idea of a clean/green Delhi is not linked to the notion of "world class," but goes back to the 1990s when M. C. Mehta, a lawyer and environmentalist, publically supported a policy that would decrease the pollution levels in Delhi through the introduction of a public transport system based on CNG, and by shifting polluting industries out of the city centre.

13. Bhalla as well as Chhachhi's works engage with the "public" life of the embankment, which often goes unnoticed by those whose everyday practices do not depend on and are not ritually related to the river. Indeed, the river offers a complex microcosm of life worlds (see Hubermann 2012). This is diametrically opposed to the more panoptic view of the river as a cosmopolitan space for recreation, which rests on a different aesthetic of ordered and gated spatialisation.

14. See http://www.48c.org/spaces.html [Accessed on 21. July 2015].

15. See http://www.48c.org/artists.html [Accessed on 21. July 2015].

16. Andrej Zdravic is a Slovenia and US-based independent film and sound artist who placed three large film screens on Palika Parking in Connaught Place. These films showed images and played sounds related to the forces of nature (e.g., water, fire, earth, the human body).

17. Previously, ten sites had been chosen, but two—both further south of the other sites—had to be dropped because the metro connectivity would not have been achieved in time.

18. *Crane + Tree* is not the only work dealing with forests and trees; Amar Kanwar's *The Sovereign Forest* addresses deforestation and the exploitation of natural resources and their human caretakers—mostly tribal people from Odisha and Chhattisgarh—and thus consciously places a story from the national peripheries into the "centre" of power.

19. The Jantar Mantar, built in the early eighteenth century, is a set of several architectural astronomy instruments and part of UNESCO world heritage.

20. Moreover, as Witteveen explained, the title is reminiscent of the joy of playing with words, as in a Hobson-Jobson, a dictionary published in 1886, assembling a glossary of colloquial Anglo-Indian words which came into use during the British rule of India.

21. I want to thank one of the anonymous peer reviewers for this suggestion.

22. The term Plop Art was coined by architect James Wines (1969) and means a work of art that has been thoughtlessly "plopped" into a public space. See William Poundstone. "Plop! Splat!" http://blogs.artinfo.com/lacmonfire/2009/10/23/plop-splat/ [Accessed on 24. June 2015].

23. The Boat Club used to be a place for large protest movements/demonstrations. Following the Sikh riots in 1984, it was temporarily closed off for leisure activities and public gatherings. In 1993 the then prime minister, Narasimha Rao, banned rallies altogether. See Jha (2006).

24. Interestingly, what may not have been evident in 2008, is the fact that many urban. middle-class protest movements migrate between the street and online forums. The rape case of 2012, for instance, led to the biggest street protests since several decades, reappropriating Delhi's Rajghat.

List of illustrations

Fig 1: Detail from the frontpage of the *48°C Public.Art.Ecology* festival's website, using a cityscape image. http://www.48c.org/ [Accessed on 04. May 2015].

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Fig. 3: The festival programme. http://www.48c.org/program.html [Accessed on 04. May 2015].

Fig. 4: List of national and international artists and artist groups/performers. http://www.48c.org/artists.html [Accessed on 14. July 2015].

Fig. 5a: "Use map" of Kashmere Gate created by the Urban Resource Group. http://www.48c.org/kashmereuse.pdf [Accessed on 14. July 2015].

Fig. 5b: "Activities map" of Kashmere Gate created by the Urban Resource Group. http://www.48c.org/kashmereactivity.pdf [Accessed on 14. July 2015].

Fig. 6a–b: Sheba Chhachhi, *The Water Diviner*, 2008. Video projection (based on photographs by Umeed Mistry), silent, duration 3 minute loop. Delhi, Public Library. Photograph by Sonia Jabbar. Permission by the artist.

Fig. 7a–c: Atul Bhalla, *Chabeel*, 2008. Sand, cement, water, ceramic tiles, stickers, recyclable paper, plywood, video projection, dimensions variable. Delhi, Kashmere Gate. Photo and permission by the artist.

Fig. 7d: Plan of the artworks' locations around Kashmere Gate. http://www.48c.org/kashmeresite.swf [Accessed on 14. July 2015].

Fig. 8a–c: Haubitz + Zoche, *The Yamuna Blues*, 2008. Bamboo construction, video beamer, HD-Video, loop 10 min. Delhi, Kashmere Gate. Photos and permission by Haubitz.

Fig. 9a–b: Krishnaraj Chonat, *Crane + Tree*, 2008. Uprooted, dead tree, crane. Delhi, Barakhamba Road. Photos and permission by the artist.

Fig. 10a–b: Barakhamba Road in Delhi, 2013. Photograph by Christiane Brosius.

Fig. 11a–b: Friso Witteveen, *Hocus Pocus*, 2008. Mild steel, MDF Reflective foil and paint, 24 x 20 x 4 m. Delhi, Ramlila Ground. Photo and permission by the artist.

Fig. 12a–c: Ravi Agarwal, *Extinct*, 2008. Photographic and light-box installation, images, text and video. Delhi, Mandi House Chauraha. Photos and permission by the artist.

Fig. 13: Amar Kanwar, *The Sovereign Forest*, 2008. Installation, video screens, 160 photographs shown in forty-nine light boxes, text banner. Delhi, Jantar Mantar Road. CC BY NC SA Ramesh Lalwani. https://flic.kr/p/5Ju3qH [Accessed on 22. July 2015].

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